



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
1222 Woodward Street
Orlando, Florida 32803
407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>

VEGETABLES

WINTER ACREAGE

(January, February, March)



FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE

January 13, 2003

FLORIDA

This report reflects conditions as of January 1 and represents acreage for harvest during the winter months of January, February, March. Estimated acreage for harvest by growing area is no longer available.

WEATHER: Mostly dry weather prevailed in early **October** as Hurricane Lili rushed northward through the Gulf pulling rains away from the Peninsula. Fall crop harvesting in the central and southern Peninsula got underway by early October with a light volume of cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, squash and watermelons available. Tomato picking in the East Coast, Ruskin and Immokalee areas began around mid-to-late month. By the end of the month, sweet corn harvesting started in the Everglades and snap bean picking began in northern areas. Warm weather during the month delayed strawberry maturation with growers nearly finishing transplanting by the end of the month.

Fall crop harvesting gained momentum as **November** arrived with growers trying to meet the Thanksgiving Day demand. Strawberry producers finished transplanting early in the month and started picking very light supplies. Warm temperatures hindered strawberry fruit development during the first half of the month. Heavy rains around mid-month delayed field work, especially around Immokalee, and lowered the quality and yield prospects of some crops, especially tomatoes.

Cool temperatures prevailed over most localities during **December**. Freezes and frosts arrived in many localities, except for the southern Peninsula, beginning in some Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas during the first week. Most temperatures during the month averaged from one to seven degrees below normal in the major cities. The cooler temperatures aided the development of strawberries. Storms crossing over the Panhandle and Peninsula nearly every week brought abundant moisture to many Panhandle and northern and central Peninsula localities. Some southern Peninsula areas, especially those along the southeastern coast, remained dry. The stronger storms lowered the quality and yield prospects of some vegetables growing in the central and southern Peninsula with most shipments below last year's volume. The rains interrupted planting and picking schedules throughout the month.

TOMATOES: Producers hope to harvest 12,600 acres during the winter months of January, February and March, up 100 acres from the acreage picked during the winter of 2002. Frequent storms delayed some planting and lowered the yield prospects during October through December. Most of the southern Peninsula growing areas (Immokalee, Homestead, Jupiter and Stuart) escaped freezing temperatures which were felt in many Panhandle and northern and central Peninsula areas during December. Picking remained active through most of October, November and December with volume down slightly due to reduced yields.

SWEET CORN: Growers expect to pick 7,900 acres through March, down 100 acres from the acreage harvested last winter. The frequent rains during November and December boosted growth and ear development. Picking is active.

BELL PEPPER: Producers expect to harvest 6,000 acres this winter, up 400 acres or 7 percent from the 5,600 acres picked a year ago. Frequent rainfall during October, November and December interrupted some planting and harvesting activities, and lowered yield prospects. Picking is active with volume down a little from last year.

STRAWBERRIES: Strawberry acreage at 7,100 acres, is up three percent from 2002. Harvest started near the middle of November. Growers ran sprinklers during the cold period of January 7th and 8th with some minor water damage reported. Early volume is down from last year due partly to the switch to later maturing varieties.

SNAP BEANS: Harvested acreage is expected to total 12,500 acres, up 500 acres from last year. Harvest is active with good quality reported.

CABBAGE: Producers hope to cut 5,500 acres through March, the same level as last year. Harvest is underway with no major problems and the crop is in good condition.

UNITED STATES

The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the winter quarter is forecast at 185,200 acres. This is 4 percent above 2002 but 2 percent below 2001 for comparable commodities. Acreage increases for snap beans, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, head lettuce, bell pepper, spinach, and tomatoes more than offset decreases for carrots and sweet corn. Celery acreage remained the same.

CABBAGE: Winter acreage for harvest is forecast at 13,200 acres, 6 percent above 2002 and 11 percent above 2001. Texas cabbage production continues to flourish and yield is expected to be good this season due to excellent weather conditions.

CARROTS: Winter harvested acreage is forecast at 23,500 acres, virtually unchanged from last year but 6 percent below two years ago. The California crop is reported in good condition with no major problems. High demand for baby carrots continues. In Texas, growers are expecting better yields due to a new hybrid carrot planted this season.

HEAD LETTUCE: Area for harvest is forecast at 67,000 acres, up 4 percent from last year but virtually unchanged from two years ago. Arizona growers are dealing with the typical pests and diseases in the crop. In some areas, warm weather has accelerated crop growth and caused marketing of the crop to begin too early creating depressed prices. California's harvest began early in some areas of the Imperial Valley. Harvest typically runs December 15 through March 15, but began the last week of November this year. The crop is reported in good condition but wet conditions did slow field activity in some areas the last two weeks of December.

STRAWBERRIES: Spring acreage in Michigan and Oregon is forecast at 4,500 acres, unchanged from 2002 but 6 percent below 2001. In Michigan, winter snowfall and temperatures have been average to date. The crop in Oregon is progressing well with no problems reported.

Selected Fresh Market Vegetables and Strawberries: Area for Harvest by Crop, State, and
Total, Winter Season, 2001-2002 and Forecasted Area 2003

Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Winter acreage			2003 area for harvest as percent of 2002
		Harvested		For harvest 2003	
		2001	2002		
		Acres			Percent
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	11,000	12,000	12,500	104
CABBAGE:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	5,000	5,500	5,500	100
Texas	Dec-Mar	6,900	6,900	7,700	116
Total		11,900	12,400	13,200	106
SWEET CORN:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	7,400	8,000	7,900	99
EGGPLANT: ^{1/}					
Florida	Jan-Mar	500			
BELL PEPPER: ^{2/}					
Florida	Jan-Mar	4,400	5,600	6,000	107
TOMATOES:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	14,000	12,500	12,600	101
CARROTS:					
California	Jan-Mar	23,000	21,500	21,500	100
Texas	Dec-Mar	2,000	2,100	2,000	95
Total		25,000	23,600	23,500	99
HEAD LETTUCE:					
Arizona--Western	Nov-Apr	51,800	50,000	52,000	104
California	Jan-Mar	15,000	14,500	15,000	103
Total		66,800	64,500	67,000	104
BROCCOLI: ^{2/}					
California	Jan-Mar	29,500	22,000	23,500	107
CAULIFLOWER: ^{2/}					
California	Jan-Mar	9,500	8,000	9,000	112
CELERY: ^{2/}					
California	Jan-Mar	7,700	7,500	7,500	100
SPINACH:					
Texas	Dec-Mar	2,500	2,200	2,500	114
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		42,300	43,600	44,500	102
United States		190,200	178,300	185,200	104
STRAWBERRIES ^{2/}					
Florida	Dec-May	6,500	6,900	7,100	103

^{1/} Estimate discontinued in 2002. ^{2/} Includes fresh market and processing.